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ABSTRACT

Using preliminary data from studies of the 1980 debates between the presidential candidates, this paper responds to the argument that presidential debates are not debates at all but rather "joint news conferences." The paper first contends that the encounters of the candidates were "real" debates since they conformed to the definition of debate as an event in which two or more advocates present conflicting positions on a proposition in a series of alternating presentations. The paper next analyzes the performance of the members of the press who served as panelists during the debates and concludes that their performance limited the quality of the debates. The paper then suggests that the quality of the debates also suffered because of the restraints on the modes of arguing that are imposed on an incumbent president. (FL)

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THE QUALITY OF THE 1980 PRESIDENTIAL FORUMS: A "REVISIONIST" POSITION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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In this panel of papers we may be engaging in an exercise to test the aphorism that it is better to debate an issue without settling it, than to settle an issue without debating it. In a sense, this program is an extension of the debate over the debates that so preoccupied Carter, Reagan, Anderson and even Kennedy during the past year. The dispute has shifted from calculations of whose campaign might benefit most from one type of debate or another--or no debates at all--to more fundamental questions about the nature and the merits of the communication phenomena that we call presidential debates.

The purpose of our paper is to provide a preliminary synthesis of studies currently in progress (or recently completed) on the 1980 presidential debates. The data reported is drawn largely, but not exclusively from a book of edited studies on the 1980 debates which is presently in preparation.[1] Based upon this preliminary material, this paper responds to the conventional wisdom that presidential debates are not debates. In particular, we would like to advance three notions about the 1980 presidential forums:

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1) These forums were real debates--although not great ones;

2) The quality of the debates was limited by the performances of the panelists; and

3) The quality of the debates also suffered because of weaknesses that may be typical of the debating of incumbents.

It hardly needs to be repeated that academics as well as news commentators generally regard presidential forums as phoney debates. The commonplace assessment is that far from being the "Great Debates" which the public deserves, these events are neither great, nor debates. None of this is to say that anyone regards presidential forums as unimportant. As the Washington Post remarked about the audience of 55 million people who watched the Reagan-Anderson debate of Sepember 21, 1980: "Any campaign event which draws this kind of crowd and attention is, by definition and arithmetic, significant."[2] One need look no further than the second Carter-Ford debate of 1976 for convincing evidence of the potential impact of such debates on the election of the President of the United States. In a carefully documented paper, Burns W. Roper (the Chairman of the Roper Organization, Inc., a national polling firm) presented persuasive evidence that the second debate was "the decisive factor in turning around Jimmy Carter's declining prospects" in October of 1976. The debate, Roper argues, was "a turning point in the dynamics of the election. It caused a reversal of trend, a change in thinking"--and as a consequence, the election of a President.[3]

The charge, however, has been that whatever their impact, the presidential debates have been (in J. Jeffery Auer's phrase) "counterfeit debates." Auer advanced this thesis in the original volume on The Great Debates between Kennedy and Nixon.[4] Richard Salant, former president of CBS News and now an executive with NBC, advanced a similar thesis in the 1976 version of The Great Debates book, characterizing the Carter-Ford forums as "good but not great nondebates." Those events, he noted, were really "joint news conferences rather than debates."[5] Lloyd Bitzer and his coauthor, Theodore Rueter, concurred in their book-length study of the 1976 debates. In fact, they adopted Auer's phrase as their sub-title: The Counterfeit Debates of 1976.[6]

Studies of the 1980 debates, it appears, are beginning to suggest a revisionist position--that these affairs were debates even if not great debates. Such a claim, of course, in no way attempts to refute characterizations of the 1960 and 1976 presidential forums as nondebates, although it alerts us to the danger of assuming that all presidential forums in all recent elections are essentially similar. If the 1980 forums were more like debates than their predecessors, then we may hope that future presidential forums will not just be debates, but might even be great debates. There is some evidence that the persistent criticisms of the earlier forums may have influenced sponsors and participants alike to move toward more genuine debates in 1980.[7]

To be sure, any claim that the 1980 debates are more like debates than those of 1960 and 1976 turns partially upon a shifting definition of "a debate." Moreover, such a position in no way minimizes the impact of television broadcasting and the news media upon the public perception of the debates. As Richard Salant has candidly remarked: "Because of the format [of TV news],

we go with attacks and counterattacks. And because we go with them, that usually means we get them."[8] Televised debates, just as TV news reports on the debates, will always be part of a larger drama of the campaign--a drama intensified by the inherently dramatic nature of the television medium. This was probably true of political debates before TV, but the effect of TV has been to amplify the overall drama of which the debates are a part. As a consequence, less attention is paid to the debates themselves.[9] But debates within a political drama are still debates.

While descriptions of earlier forums as "Great Debates" were without doubt the result of "unwarranted euphoria,"[10] it might be a roughly equivalent (but reverse) exercise in hyperbole to dismiss all of the seven televised debates of the 1980 presidential primary elections and the general election as "counterfeit."

The 1980 Presidential Forums As Debates

To characterize the 1980 forums as debates--even if not great ones--we must adopt a rather straight-forward definition of a debate as an event in which two or more advocates present conflicting positions on a proposition in a series of alternating presentations.[11] Since both major presidential forums in 1980 had two advocates, the key questions obviously become: 1) Were there debate propositions? And 2) Did the candidates clash on these propositions?

Debate propositions were present--both the three obvious propositions that each of the three candidates (Reagan, Anderson, and Carter) ought to be elected, and the more specific propositions implied in the questions from panelists. Of course, poor questions sometimes disguised these "mini-propositions," but they were still present. As part of the development of authenticated transcripts of both debates, one student of debate has simply

translated each of the six questions posed in the Reagan-Anderson debate into its implied resolution. For example, Soma Golden's question on religion and politics was transformed easily into the proposition: "Resolved, that a President should be guided by the principles of organized religion on social, moral, and defense issues." The panelists did not always present such clear statements of the debate question. Consider Jane Bryant Quinn's particularly inane question demanding that each candidate promise to "publish specific forecasts" of inflation on his economic policies "within two weeks." In this instance, both Reagan and Anderson answered "Yes," and then created their own resolution for debate rooted in the unstated premises of Quinn's question: "Resolved, that a non-inflationary economic program can only be implemented without tax cuts." Anderson affirmed the resolution, while Reagan took the opposing side and argued that he could both reduce inflation and cut taxes.[12] Time does not permit a review of the questions in the Reagan-Carter debate, but they too could be translated into their implied debate propositions. As with the Anderson debate, the questions in the Carter debate varied in their quality.

In short, presidential debates did occur. Propositions were raised and the presidential candidates clashed over those propositions. Given the stringent time-limits, a remarkable amount of clash occurred. John Morello of James Madison University found that in the Reagan-Anderson debate there were 18 specific instances of refutation--9 by each candidate in response to claims asserted by his opponent.[13] Neither debater was much given to equivocation. Anderson, you will recall, dismissed Reagan as a man "who once again has demonstrated . . . a total misunderstanding of the energy crisis." Reagan just as directly challenged Anderson: "Well some people look up figures and some people make up figures and John has just made up some very interesting figures." Auer, Morello, and others have pointed out that such clashes often failed to go beyond the stage of establishing the point of stasis. But the lack of fully developed refutation seems to be due to the extraordinarily brief time-limits imposed upon the candidates. After getting all of two and a half minutes to state their positions, each debater had only 75 seconds for a refutation statement. From the viewpoint of reasoned discourse, this is grossly inadequate; but television producers and perhaps television viewers seem to accept it as a norm. An "important story" on network news, for example, gets "the routine one minute and 15 seconds average."[14]

A similar undeveloped but nevertheless real level of clash can be found in the Reagan-Carter debate of October 28, 1980. One content analysis of that debate which focused on the question of how frequently the debaters responded to the questions and how often they clashed with one another reveals that as the role of the panelists declined, the level of clash increased.

As you will recall, the Reagan-Carter debate featured perhaps the most convoluted format in the history of televised debates. The first half of the debate included "follow-up questions" by the panelists, while the second half replaced these follow-up questions with rebuttal speeches and summary comments by the candidates. The shift in format at the mid-point of the debate particularly influenced Carter's debating. For example, in the later half of the debate--with the panelists participating less--both Reagan and Carter significantly increased the number of their statements which analyzed positions of their opposition, with Carter tending to attack and Reagan tending to defend himself. Carter also began to make more explicit comparisons between his positions and Reagan's. However, with the reporters no longer "following up" with related questions, Carter also significantly increased his frequency of statements unrelated to policy.[15] In general, the study reported upon this morning by Patricia Riley and Thomas Hollihan seems to support the conclusion that clash did regularly occur in the Reagan-Carter debate. For example, they have reported that almost half of Reagan's statements were critical of Carter and more than a quarter of Carter's statements were critical of Reagan.[16]

As an aside, it seems worth noting that both these content analyses (Riley and Hollihan, and Prentice, et al.) seem to show that Reagan carried the burden of debating Carter. While media reports of the debates stressed Reagan's affability under fire,[17] an examination of the debate itself suggests that it was Carter who was evading a more direct debate. The fact that Reagan's debating (as opposed to his demeanor) was not widely noted may be due to the circumstance that

Reagan did not seem to know how to close an argument effectively--to "clinch" it or "crystalize" it so as to show that his position was superior to his opponent's.[18] For example, as Reagan gave his final response to Carter's charge that the Kemp-Roth tax cut would be "highly inflationary," he asked: "Why is it inflationary to let the people keep more of their money and spend it the way they would like and it isn't inflationary to let him take that money and spend it the way he wants?" If Reagan sounds confused here, he was. He garbled his stock response on this issue, which was to the effect that private spending is no more inflationary than government spending of the same money--and it's a lot more fun. The point is not that Reagan jumbled his words. Even if he had employed his worn commonplace, his response would have been an ineffective closing argument. Not only did Reagan, as this example illustrates, frequently defuse his point though rhetorical questions rather than direct statements, but he used long rhetorical questions--in this case, one that consumed almost one-third of his entire rebuttal.

If Reagan did "out debate" Carter despite these flaws, we ought to be alerted to the possibility that an incumbent carries special burdens into a presidential debate--not just burdens of office, but the burdens of the argumentative style of the office. After all, the analysis presented by Bitzer and Reuter seems generally to portray Carter as the more sophisticated and more cogent debater as a challenger in 1976.[19] What happened to Carter in the 1980 debate? We shall return to this question in the final section of this paper.

Debate Quality and Panelists' Performances

The emergence of debatable (and debated) resolutions is particularly encouraging because this occurred despite two negative factors: 1) the tendency of the panelists to assume that they were conducting an interview instead of a debate; and 2) the natural desire of the candidates to obtain a format which would favor them individually while hampering their opponents--regardless of the impact on the quality of the debate.

There can be little doubt but that the panelists neither fully understood nor appreciated their role as people who were to state important propositions for debate. They wanted to interview, to debate, and to "unmask" the the candidates. Consider Jane Bryant Quinn's frustration at not being allowed to conduct the debate as a "live interview":

> The other frustration was the format, which gave each reporter only one question with no follow-up. The chief risk to a politician in a live interview is that the reporter will pick a big enough hole in his answer to make him look bad. But if he silences the reporter in advance, he's free to say just about anything he thinks will be believed.
>
> The reporters on the panel worried about this a lot. But the League of Women Voters felt strongly that it didn't want this show to be a press conference. It wanted a debate; a real, old-fashioned, high-school gym, debating club debate. The reporters were asked to set the agenda, ring the bell, then move out of the way and let the pols have at each other.
> So we tried, and it failed.[20]

Soma Golden, another panelist in the same debate, confessed that as a journalist she "felt under enormous pressure to try framing a single question that would somehow catch the well-briefed candidates by surprise on a subject of importance."[21] It is hardly necessary to recount the adversarial tone and the editorial remarks by many of the panelists in the debates--

comments such as Daniel Greenberg's dismissal of "campaign lullabyes" and his reprimand (delivered before he had even posed his question) that "the panel and the audience would appreciate responsiveness to the questions rather than repetitions of your campaign addresses." Despite these shortcomings, it is encouraging to report that in a careful study of both sets of debate questions Professor Jeff McCall of Northwest Missouri State University reached the conclusion that the questions in the second debate were a distinct improvement over those in the first debate.[22]

Given the questionable performance of some of the journalists on the debate panels and what in the case of Quinn appears to have been a philosophical opposition to allowing the candidates to carry forth the debate, it is ironic that the news media seemed to blame the politicians for the shortcomings of the debates. The Reagan-Anderson debate, for example, was described as "a presidential debate short on debate," a a campaign event that "wasn't a debate at all," and as "a mannerly forensic minuet." Reagan in particular was described as not being willing to "rise to debate."[23]

The candidates, of course, probably cared not a bit whether the forums were genunine debates and whether the panelists' questions implied clear resolutions--unless those features would help to win votes. Reagan's representatives in the debate negotiations with the League of Women Voters kept urging a Lincoln-Douglas format which would presumably have displayed their candidate's considerable skills as a political television performer--and which would have allowed Reagan to avoid specific issues as he chose. Carter apparently had little faith in his own ability to call Reagan to task for such evasions, Instead, his representatives insisted on questions from journalists and follow-up questions. For the purposes of public posturing, each side professed to believe that its proposals constituted a "freewheeling" format.[24]

The Burdens of the Presidential Style of Debating

Despite the desire of aspiring candidates to "appear presidential" in the 1980 debates, it was the real President who seemed to suffer. We are not referring here to the obvious point that Carter (like any recent incumbent President) had to defend a less than glowing record. Rather, we are concerned with modes of arguing which may typify incumbents. Specifically in Carter's case, there is evidence that he employed a declarative style of presidential rhetoric and that he focused on the concrete image of reality rather than an ideal image--a vision of the future. Both of these characteristics worked against Carter. To the extent that these qualities of argument are shared by incumbent presidents generally, they will also have difficulty in debates.

Presidents, as we know, make pronouncements. Having held one of the most powerful offices in the world for nearly four years, Carter seemed disinclined to justify, to argue. When responding to the first question of the debate (which dealt with the military and government spending), Carter devoted over 20% of his statements to mere assertions. One content analysis of that debate reveals that only a third of Carter's remarks in the entire debate could be classified as analytical. The same study classified almost 45% of Reagan's statements as one form of analysis or another.[25] As Patricia Riley and Thomas Hollihan have already reported, their independent content analysis revealed that Carter presented a (statistically) significantly smaller proportion of analytical statements and evidence statements than did Reagan. On the other hand, they report that almost 75% if Carter's statements were declarative rather than evidence or analysis.[26]

In part, Carter's declarative style can be attributed to his "Rose Garden" campaign strategy during the primary elections which prevented him from developing his repertoire of effective public arguments.[27] Moreover, when Carter finally did venture forth on the campaign trail, one of his favorite devices was the "Town Meeting" in which he could speak as the President answering the largely deferential questions of ordinary citizens.[28] Such sessions could hardly match Reagan's long campaign, which included five primary debates (four of which were telecast) as well as his debate with Anderson.

Carter's preference for declaration and assertion rather than argument was compounded by what may be another characteristic of the incumbent debater: a tendency to employ what Dan DeStephen of Iowa State University has labelled "reality images" rather than "value images." In the 1976 debates--as in the 1976 campaign--Carter was a master of the rhetoric of value images. He presented speeches that gave the voters "a sense of the goals, values themes and visions" of the future that he embraced. In the 1980 debate, however, Carter was similar to Ford in 1976: he neglected value images in favor of "reality images"--"detail, confrontation, and policy."[29] One searches in vain for a promise of a better America in Carter's 1980 debate remarks--even in his closing statements which he had presented so effectively in 1976. Instead of a vision of the future, Carter presented a defense of the present and warnings of the dangers posed by Reagan. As for his own record, he was almost apologetic, explaining that his presidential decisions had "been a learning process." Perhaps Carter's "reality images" are best captured in a single sentence from his final speech in the debate:

"I have seen the strength of my nation and I have seen the crises that it approached in a tentative way, and I have had to deal with those crises as best I could." Since we know that Carter is not only able to use value images, but is skilled in their use, we may infer that the conspicuous absence of such images in his debating in 1980 suggests a natural tendency for incumbents to immerse themselves in the details of governing and to neglect to address the hopes and aspirations of the electorate.

Carter, of course, did not neglect to address the people's fears. He spoke of "the future of our nation" in terms of "war and peace" and of the "sharp differences," the "stark differences" between his deliberate record and the prospect of Reagan as President. Thus, Carter's debating reflected his basic campaign strategy: to contrast the known (if not greatly admired) quality of his own leadership with the fears about the nation's future under the untried leadership of Ronald Reagan. One suspects that incumbents generally are tempted to campaign from this posture. Hence, incumbent debating of the future may resemble Carter's debating in 1980. In Carter's case, however, such a strategy was unlikely to succeed. Recently released polling data from Decision Making Information (DMI), the firm that handled the Reagan campaign, reveals that Carter's reputation had fallen so low by June 1980 that the voters found the prospect of a second Carter term more fearful than the prospect of a first Reagan term. For example, when DMI pollsters asked voters to name something <u>bad</u> that would happen if Carter were re-elected, 83% were able to predict a negative consequence. When asked the same question about Reagan, only 72% of the same sample could respond. Conversely, when asked to name something <u>good</u> that would happen if Carter were re-elected,

only 55% could think of anything, while the same question applied to Ronald Reagan produced a response from 67% of those interviewed. As DMI's executive vice president, Vincent J. Breglio, remarked shortly after the election: "The only chance Carter had to win was to change the electorate's perception of the future, to provide a positive vision. When he chose to make Gov. Reagan the main issue, he was lost."[30] The point to be made here is not only that Carter's debating served a poor strategy, but that as an incumbent he seemed naturally inclined to pursue such a strategy.

The implication is clear: incumbents must find ways to overcome these deficiencies. Given the intractable problems facing any contemporary president, it can be argued that incumbents will find themselves so low in public opinion polls at election time that they will agree to debate--as did Ford in 1976 and Carter in 1980.[31] When they do debate, they must take into account the differences between the natural debating styles of incumbents and challengers.

Similarly, challengers must not assume that the incumbent will debate as he (or she) did when a challenger. In 1980, Reagan's Debate Task Force worked up careful analyses of Carter's debating in 1976, but they also studied his performance in "Town Meetings" and at presidential press conferences. Our guess is that Carter's actual debating style in 1980 was predicted far better by his speaking at these latter two types of forums than by his debating in 1976. By debating style, we should note, we do not mean Carter's nonverbal cues in delivery and presence or the pattern of his language usage, but his routine mode of arguing.

We are even brash enough to predict that if incumbents are to be successful in presidential debates, they must learn how to manage the

argumentative burdens of the office. They must re-learn how to argue in public instead of merely asserting. They must find a mechanism for regaining the moral ground, for once again appealing to the ideal values which helped them win as challengers. One such mechanism might be found in the acceptance speeches of incumbants at nominating conventions in which the incumbant regularly regains the "ideal" ground for argument. Traditionally, the acceptance speech of the incumbant casts him in the role of a practical prophet who has <u>almost</u> (but not yet quite) lead the nation forward to its destiny. He needs another term to fulfill the nation's promise, but his work is threatened by the misguided policies of the opposition party and its candidate.[32] If incumbant debaters fail to make these adjustments, they will run the risk of failing as did Ford and Carter.

<u>In Sum</u>

Presidential debates have now occurred often enough for scholars of communication and rhetorical studies to begin dealing with specific questions about this form of discourse: How do challengers debate? How do incumbants debate? How do panelists debate? What impact do such debating styles have on the quality of these debates? The answers to these questions will have different uses for different audiences. If we perform our research well and share it widely, sponsors of political debates may use our findings to improve debate formats--perhaps even allowing more time for refutation to develop. Panelists may be influenced to pose debate questions instead of debate positions. Political strategists may help candidates improve their style of debating. And, one might hope, the electorate might be in a better position to evaluate presidential candidates who participate in debates.

NOTES

[1]The research reported here is drawn largely, but not exclusively, from Kurt W. Ritter, ed., The Presidential Debates of 1980 (in preparation), an edited volume of studies. Some of the essays in this book will appear first (usually in a somewhat briefer and preliminary form) in a special issue which Ritter edited of Speaker and Gavel, volume 18, number 1 (Fall 1980) which is presently in press. For the sake of clarity, citations of studies that will appear in the journal as well as the book will be marked with an asterisk (*). Of course, the present paper is concerned only with the quality of the two major debates of the 1980 election; hence, it draws upon only selected essays in the book and is not concerned with entire sections of the volume, such as the debates of the Republican primary elections, the impact of the debates on issues and images, the role of the media, and so forth.

[2]Washington Post, 23 Sept. 1980, p. A-14

[3]Burns W. Roper, "The Effect of the Debates on the Carter/Ford Election," a paper presented to the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., Sept. 1, 1977, pp. 1, 12.

[4]J. Jeffery Auer, "The Counterfeit Debates," in The Great Debates: Background--Perspective--Effects /Kennedy vs. Nixon/, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 142-58.

[5]Richard Salant, "The Good But Not Great Nondebates: Some Random Personal Notes," in The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 175-86.

[6]Lloyd Bitzer and Theodore Rueter, Carter vs. Ford: The Counterfeit Debates of 1976 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), esp. pp. 3-16.

[7]It should be noted that the assessment of the 1980 forums as debates is not shared by all critics. J. Jeffery Auer, for example, finds them still falling far short of the mark. See his essay, "Great Myths About the Great Debates,"* in The Presidential Debates of 1980.

[8]Quoted in David Halberstam, "How Television Failed the American Voter," Parade, 11 Jan. 1981, p. 8.

[9]For broader discussions of the impact of broadcast media on political rhetoric, see Paul E. Corcoran, Political Language and Rhetoric (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), esp. pp. 156-80; Richard M. Merelman, "The Dramaturgy of Politics," in Drama in Life: The Uses of Communication in Society, eds. James E. Combs and Michael W. Mansfield (New York: Hastings House, 1976), pp. 285-301.

[10]Auer, "Great Myths About the Great Debates."

[11]Auer presents five requirements for a debate, but at times these tend to stipulate the requirements of a good debate, not just a debate. For example, he not only notes that the debaters should be given equal time, but also adequate time. He calls for an audience "decision" in the sense of a thoughtful deliberation based on adequate information. He requires not just an implied proposition, but a stated resolution. Each of these conditions is desirable and each is a matter of degree. Our position is that the 1980 debates satisfied these demands at least well enough for a debate to progress, but not well enough to allow for great debates.

[12]Not only is it possible to specify resolutions, but one can even create systematic outlines of the debate on each resolution--a "flow sheet" in the jargon of the school-boy (or girl) debater. See Donald Govang and Kurt Ritter, "The 1980 Presidential Debates: Authenticated Texts of Reagan vs. Anderson and Reagan vs. Carter with Introduction and Analysis" (in preparation) in The Presidential Debates of 1980. All quotations from the Reagan-Anderson and the Reagan-Carter debates are from this source. These transcripts are being prepared from stenographic reports of the debates provided to the authors by Dr. Myles Martel, who was a member of Reagan's Debate Task Force. The stenographic reports are being compared with video-tapes of the debates; the resulting authenticated transcripts reveal a number of errors in the debate texts published in the New York Times.

[13]John T. Morello, "In Defense of Presidential Debates as Debates: Journalistic vs. Argumentative Analyses of the 1980 Forums," in The Presidential Debates of 1980.

[14]Elmer Lower, "Political Conventions--Does TV Hold a Distorting Mirror?" Television Quarterly, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Fall 1980), p. 25.

[15]See Diana B. Prentice, Janet K. Larson, and Matthew J. Sobnosky, "The Carter-Reagan Debate: Clash or Misnomer?" (working title) in The Presidential Debates of 1980.

[16]Patricia Riley and Thomas Hollihan, "The 1980 Presidential Debates: An Analysis of the Issues and Arguments,"* in The Presidential Debates of 1980.

[17]We are indebted to Professor Herbert Craig's paper, "Affability vs. Incumbancy in the Carter-Reagan Debate," for helping us recognize affability as the essence of Reagan's TV debate persona.

[18]In viewing the live debate, we tooprobably gave insufficient attention to the specifics of Reagan's refutation and rebuttal. This issue was brought to our attention in Professor Charles Kneupper's paper, "The Carter-Reagan Debate: An Examination of Discursive and Non-Discoursive Form."

[19]Although Bitzer and Rueter refrain from offering a verdict on whether Carter or Ford was the "better" debater, their specific analysis of the argumentation provided by the two men generally creates a picture of Carter as the superior debater. See Bitzer and Rueter, Carter vs. Ford, esp. pp. 145-92.

[20]Jane Bryant Quinn, "A Reporter's Complaint," Newsweek (Oct. 6, 1980), p. 42.

[21]New York Times, 24 Sept. 1980, Pt. 4, p. 20, as quoted in Auer, "Great Myths About the Great Debates."

[22]Jeff McCall, "The Appropriateness of Panelists' Questions in the 1980 Presidential Debates."

[23]These comments come, respectively, from: "Oh for an Empty Chair," Washington Post, 23 Sept. 1980, p. B-2; Tom Petit on the NBC "Today" show as quoted in "Monday Morning Quarterbacks Call Mixed Debate Signals," Washington Post, 23 Sept. 1980, p. A-2; Robert G. Kaiser, "The Morning After," Washington Post, 23 Sept. 1980, p. A-1; and "Reagan Was the Major Benefit of Anderson's Success," Washington Post, 23 Sept. 1980, p. A-2. For these and other press evaluations of the debates, see Morello, "In Defense of Presidential Debates as Debates"; and Goodwin Berquist and James Golden, "Media Rhetoric, Criticism, and the Public Perception of the 1980 Presidential Debates," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 67 (May 1981), in press.

[24]See Rich Jaroslovsky, "Carter, Reagan Teams Sketch Game Plan for Face-Off Tentatively Set for Oct. 28," Wall Street Journal, 20 Oct. 1980, p. 4; and "A Debate Over the Debates," Newsweek (Sept. 8, 1980), p. 19.

[25]See Prentice, Larson, and Sobnosky, "The Carter-Reagan Debate: Clash or Misnomer?" In summarizing analytic statements, I am combining categories reported by Prentice, et al., as analysis and analysis of opposition.

[26]Riley and Hollihan, "The 1980 Presidential Debates: An Analysis of Issues and Arguments."

[27]For this and other observations, we are indebted to Dan DeStephen's essay, "Value Images in Presidential Debates" (working title), in The Presidential Debates of 1980.

[28] Between September 2 and October 25, 1980, Carter held ten "Town Meetings" in eight states ranging from California to New York. Although these events were staged largely for the media attention they would stimulate, they did provide Carter with practice in arguing in public. Unlike the situation that Carter would encounter with Reagan, the individual citizen rising to ask a single question had no opportunity—or intention--to refute Carter in a speech.

[29] DeStephen, "Value Images in Presidential Debates." Bitzer and Rueter note, for example, that "many Carter speeches [in the 1976 debates], especially the speeches concluding each debate, contained vision statements . . . . The vision statements were earnest, at times evangelical." See Bitzer and Rueter, Carter vs. Ford, pp. 140-41. For an analysis of Carter's entire 1976 campaign in terms of his value images, see John H. Patton, "A Government As Good As Its People: Jimmy Carter and the Restoration of Transcendence to Politics," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 63 (1977), 249-57.

[30] Quoted in Jack J. Honomichl, "The Marketing of a Candidate," Advertising Age (Dec. 15, 1980), p. 68. Carter's focus on the negative--both in the campaign and in the debate, and indeed in the debate about whether there would be any debates--contrasted so sharply with his persona from the 1976 campaign that James Reston, among others, seemed to wonder whether he was the same man who had been elected four years earlier: "He seems to have lost his way, and the tragedy of this is that he has not been faithful to himself. He may very well win but not be able to command the respect of either his friends or his opponents and therefore not be able to govern effectively." See James Reston, "What Ails Carter?" New York Times, 21 Sept. 1980, p. E19.

[31] In this regard, see Charls E. Walker's remarks in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), p. 51.

[32] See Kurt W. Ritter, "The Jeremiad Tradition in American Political Rhetoric: Presidential Nomination Acceptance Addresses, 1960-1976," Central States Speech Journal, 31 (1980), 153-71.